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ABSTRACT

In the last fifteen years, the concept of field-based experiences has changed from a Schools, College, and Department of Education (SCDE) focus toward a consumer-oriented model. This paper briefly reviews the early goals and describes the definitions which differentiate clinical experiences from field experiences which may help clarify research results on field-based education. Using the literature from current studies of teacher education, the paper identifies the parameters of field experiences and describes how these are being applied to a field-based elementary teacher education program in the Southwest. (Author)

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FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCES: A MID-EIGHTIES MODEL

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ABSTRACT

In the last fifteen years the concept of field-based experiences has changed from a Schools, College, and Department of Education (SCDE) focus toward a consumer oriented model. This paper briefly reviews the early goals and describes the present orientation of field-based programs. It presents definitions which differentiate clinical experiences from field-experiences which may help clarify research results on field-based education. Using the literature from current studies of teacher education, the author identifies the parameters of field experiences and describes how these are being applied to a field-based elementary teacher education program in the Southwest.

Field-Based Experiences: A Mid-Eighties Model

In the last fifteen years the concept of field-based experience has changed, but its use has increased to the point that (Morris, Pannell, and Houston 1985) report that the standards of 35 states provide field experiences as a part of their teacher education programs. Participation of each student is required by 7 states. As the field-based movement has developed we have shifted our goals. In the first few years we were interested in socializing the student into the school environment, improving cognitive and affective learning, allowing informed career choices, and improving the student's success as a student teacher. As summaries of research such as Zeichner (1980) and Calfee (1983) point out little success was achieved in socialization: cooperating teacher attitudes still prevail over the attitudes of students they supervise.

Cognitive or affective results were not what field-based proponents expected either. Summaries of research, such as Zeichner's indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between in the cognitive performance of campus-based and field-based students, as Calfee (1983) points out, even though students in field-based programs received half of the content presented to campus-based students, there was no

statistical difference on their scores on cognitive tests. There was a reduction in the time spent in college classroom instruction, but this reduction in material presented did not have the deleterious effect one would expect. Denton (1982) found, however, that field-based experiences provided a meaningful set which improved students cognitive performance in subsequent courses. The only positive evidences of impact on attitudes was in students' perception of their potential success in student teaching (Weaver et. al. 1979).

As a result of field-based experiences there has been a significant shift towards a more consumer oriented model, one which focuses on the needs and concerns of the student and schools. Perhaps this has been permitted by the decrease in concern over the cognitive aspects of the programs and a more realistic perception of the role colleges and universities play in teacher education. The goals for such programs have shifted toward: assessing the students performance as a potential teacher, providing situations in which the student can practice and develop teaching skills (Elliot and Mays 1979), and increasing students' confidence in student teaching. The clearest results of research on field-based programs comes from student survey data which shows that graduates of field-based programs rate themselves significantly higher than do graduates of campus-based programs (Haring, 1980). Perhaps recent success results from a clearer understanding of the purpose of field-based experience.

As one reviews the research on field-based experiences it becomes evident that, as researchers, we need to standardize our terminology in the study of field-based education. Until recently, the research on student teaching and pre-student experiences have been lumped together under the concept of field-experiences clouding the results of research accomplished under the separate concepts. Research such as that reviewed by Ziechner (1980) makes this mistake. A clarification of terminology is possible if one uses the recent American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, AACTE,(1983) publication as a source for working definitions. This publication substitutes clinical experiences for student teaching: those experiences which determine whether the student has the qualities and characteristics of a teacher. If one accepts this conceptualization, then field-based experiences can be defined as experiences which allow prospective teachers to observe and practice instructional theory in environments which facilitate early feedback, evaluation, and modification. Using these definitions should clarify our concepts, permit the further clarification of our goals, and allow us to assess our progress.

Two recent publications seem to focus our attention more clearly too. First, The National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education (1985) states that the list of goals for the professional education of teachers should include:

1. Teaching students how to select appropriate content and

concepts.

2. Teaching students to understand how children think and learn.

3. Teaching students to use a variety of teaching strategies.

4. Allowing students to observe and analyze the performance of a variety of children.

5. Giving students an understanding of how technology can be integrated into practice ensuring the development of higher order thinking, problem solving, conceptual and social learning.

6. Providing the student an understanding of the conceptual relationships of ideas and facts they learn in their advanced academic courses.

7. Permitting the student to participate in detailed analysis and criticism of their own and their peer's teaching.

Of these seven goals, at least the last five can best be accomplished in a field-based setting. The first two reflect foundations elements which can be introduced in the college classroom and then applied in the field setting. A second source, AACTE (1983) mentioned earlier, suggests that field-based experiences should:

1. Be carefully designed and supervised moving through stages of increasing responsibility.

2. Allow prospective teachers to observe and practice instructional theory in environments which facilitate early feedback, evaluation, and modification.

The remainder of this article will illustrate how these goals are being implemented in a field-based program at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

Our field-based program combines language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies methods courses into a one-semester block providing twelve hours of credit. In this article we will look at the instructional elements we are emphasizing, relating these to the objectives listed above.

Selecting Content and Concepts

One of the reasons for selecting this combination of courses for a field-based setting is to allow students to see that what they are being taught is relevant to the classroom. It is difficult to convince a college student of the relevance of what they are learning without field experiences. Of course the theorectical element must come from the foundations courses and the campus-based element of the field-experience.

How Children Think and Learn

Learning theory must come into play here too, but much of what we do in the instruction on teaching strategies, discussed later, applies here. This becomes evident when one watches a field-based student attempting to help children develop a concept or form a generalization. The need for providing children with examples and non-examples, for helping them see relationships, or helping them summarize what they have seen becomes evident to the neophyte.

Teaching Strategies

One of our important goals is to get students to study teaching, we are interested in providing models on which they can build. We demonstrate and develop five teaching strategies: direct instruction, classification, interpretation of data, and exploring feelings and values in social studies. We also use the discovery model and exposition with interaction in science.

Focusing on teaching strategies in science and social studies moves our methods courses to a higher conceptual level for two reasons. First, we ask students to apply the strategies to new teaching situations and monitor their progress; and second, we ask the students to translate the strategies into different teaching devices: games, centers, and learning activity packets. The teaching strategies themselves and the media devices the students develop help us to focus on the instructional interaction model we are teaching. This model explains the role of technology in instruction.

Integration of Technology

We teach that experiences are obtained through instruction: a set of teacher actions (TA), using some mediating device (M), allowing student actions (SA), which produce a resultant outcome. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

Content TA + M + SA Resultant Outcome

The point is that changing any one of the components influences the outcome of learning. Therefore the selection of a mediating device **does make a difference.** It effects both the

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teacher actions and the student actions. Each mediating device: programmed learning, learning centers, games, textbooks, films, or microcomputers affects the resultant outcome because its effective use requires a set of teacher and student actions. These concepts are taught and applied in our lessons on instructional design. This model is also followed in our Instructional Planning and Assessment forms which the students use in instructional planning.

Using the teaching strategies along with instructional design permits the college student to see the development of higher order thinking skills. Focusing on the levels of thinking of Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy and applying this to an analysis of the strategies provides the field-base students the theoretical and the practical experience needed to facilitate higher level thinking.

Exposed to a Variety of Student:

We also use directed teaching experiences. The directed teaches are designed to place the field-experience student in a teaching situation with 3-5 students for 20-30 minutes. In the beginning of the semester the experience is designed in advance by the course instructors. We begin by modeling behaviors for our field-based students. They then experience using a teaching strategy, prepared materials, and groups of students from different grade levels. We are allowing students to try out new teaching strategies with a variety of students. Such a procedure

assures an exposure to students from a variety of backgrounds from all grade levels.

Understand Conceptual Relationships

Integrating the conceptual relationships of ideas and facts from all of the advanced academic courses to which a group of 20-25 juniors or seniors can be exposed is a monumental task. Their advanced academic courses range from work in the arts and sciences to reading. We do get many "ah-ha's" as students see relationships from some of their courses. We use many of the students as resource people in our own class because of their known background and training. In general however, this is one of our weak areas.

Participate in an Analysis of Teaching

We enter the analysis of teaching through our supervision which emphasizes an open collegial relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. This approach, we feel, exchanges "You'd better do a better job!" for "Let's see if there's another way." Specifically, we use the clinical supervision model. Our reasons for implementing the clinical supervision were threefold. First, we wanted to get students to study teaching. We felt that one of the best ways of getting students to study teaching was to get them to begin talking about the act of teaching, to encourage them to search for alternatives, and to promote the examination of a variety of solutions to teaching

problems. The second goal was to provide a variety of peer models. Such an approach can prevent the criticism experienced by student teaching programs: trainees are provided only one role model. Peer modeling provides the needed additional models.

Our third goal, which can be a corollary to peer modeling is team building (Rooze and Whitfield, 1978). Everyone needs a support group; especially in times of high anxiety. Both teaching children and learning new skills are anxiety producing! If one has a team of individuals focused on a similar problem, there is a good possibility for the development of a support group. It permits the development of a collaborative as opposed to a competitive system (Sergiovanni, 1984). We feel the Clinical Supervision Model (Goldhamer, Anderson, and Krajewski, 1980) accomplishes these goals.

Clinical supervision, hereafter called the clinical observation cycle, contains five steps. The first is the pre-observation planning session in which the observee shares what is to be observed and assigns specific observational assignments to the team members. The second step in the process is the actual observation in which data is gathered on the observee's performance. The third step is a strategy session among the observers in which the observation is discussed and conclusions are drawn upon the data which is to be reported to the observee and how this information is to be presented. In the post observation conference, the fourth step, the observers present the information agreed upon in the previous step. In the

fifth step, the post observational analysis, a complete assessment of the observation episode is accomplished. This allows for growth among the team members and builds a better working relationship.

Carefully Designed and Supervised

Our field-based program is designed using the direct instruction concept (Rosenshine, 1979). This concept has been developed into a teaching strategy for the direct teaching of concepts and skills. This procedure assures feedback to the instructor and provides correctives to the student. The model is similar in structure to that presented by Gagne' (1974, pp. 123-133) in his discussion of the delivery of instruction.

The first step of the strategy, motivation, can be accomplished in many ways. We generally accomplish it by either showing a need or presenting an instructional problem.

The next step is providing a model. We demonstrate a teaching strategy , a set of teacher behaviors which create a set of student responses in a social environment, which we expect our field-based students to perform. After the demonstration we explain what we've accomplished. This is the third step in the direct instruction strategy, imparting information to illustrate the model. Information that puts meaning into seemingly vague generalities.

We allow for active participation, the fourth step, so effective learning can take place; note taking is not active

participation. Breaking into small groups and practicing with their peers, later in directed teaching situations, and still later in clinical observation cycles provides active participation.

This leads directly to the fifth step, knowledge of results. Good teaching requires the recognition of and the correction of errors made by individual students. As the student approximates the desired behavior s/he needs to know "Is that right, professor?" We provide a number of means for our students to obtain feedback on their performance: results of directed teaches, results of experiences with assigned children, results of peer observations, and structured analysis through forms which require them to examine their teaching performance.

The use of correctives provides the sixth step of the strategy, guidance. Guidance answers the student's covert question, "Why did I get that wrong?" "How can I do a better job?" It does more than allowing knowledge of results in that it provides the reasoning behind the corrected behavior, it supplies the missing step or reveals the missed perception. We even allow the correction of missed perceptions through the resubmission of work and the reteaching of lessons. In this way we are extending the learning time required by some students, an important element for mastery.

Early Feedback, Evaluation, and Modification

The observation cycles are followed by reteaches. After

the student has been observed by the professor and their peers and received comments on their lesson, they are asked to reteach the lesson changing the suggested elements. The reteach experience is an opportunity to try teaching something another way, something like being able to re-call the play after the playback. Essentially our program models, provides information, allows active response, gives knowledge of results and provides guidance toward more effective teaching behavior.

Similar to other programs across the country, Texas Tech is becoming more consumer conscious, which is probably in the best interest of society, the institution, and the student. What little research that has been accomplished on our program indicates similar findings as those reported earlier. We are creating a better satisfied consumer according to surveys of students and responses from school districts. Our program is in line with the recommendations of the professional societies. It remains to be seen whether we're creating a better product.

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